2002 High Spatial Resolution Commercial Imagery Workshop

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Welcoming Remarks

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Good Morning. I'd like to welcome you all to this Commercial Imagery Workshop, with a special welcome to our partners from NASA, NIMA, and Space Imaging.

I'd also like to thank George Lee and Greg Snyder for their efforts in ensuring that we do the best job we can of hosting today, and for the opportunity to open this unique forum for highlighting product qualities and scientific applications of IKONOS commercial satellite data.

This workshop represents our continuing commitment to remote sensing technology as a very important tool in providing information to address issues of critical importance to all of us.

I'm enthusiastic about the cooperation between NASA, NIMA, and USGS that brings us to this Workshop, devoted to characterizing key IKONOS products and their geometric and radiometric attributes. I find particularly valuable the unique contributions of each agency in applying our respective areas of expertise to this evaluation to ensure the overall utility of these products to our missions.

The combined results of this evaluation will be of broad interest throughout the user community, and for that I'd like to applaud the cooperative relationship between the engineering and management staff of the three agencies and Space Imaging. I think our Government partners realize the benefit of verifying these products, which I hope in turn stimulates new business opportunities for Space Imaging.

I suspect you know that the USGS organizes its scientific activities around four Earth science disciplines: geology, biology, water resources, and geography. The geography discipline embodies the mapping activities that were previously conducted under the National Mapping Division. Across these disciplines, the USGS organizes and carries out something like thirty scientific programs.

We're particularly interested in the subject of this workshop because many of these programs will, in one way or another, utilize the benefits of remote sensing in their work. For this reason, and to facilitate the work of those programs, the USGS established, just this fiscal year, a Land Remote Sensing Program.

This program is chartered to support a variety of remote sensing data collection, archiving, and distribution activities of the Bureau in support of our internal programs, and to support the earth science data needs of our customers and cooperators where possible.

The program intends to strengthen the USGS's ability to fulfill its strategic plan: 1) to facilitate monitoring, scientific description, and understanding of the Earth and its natural and man-induced processes, 2) to minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; 3) to manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and 4) protect and enhance the quality of life for U.S. citizens.

The emergence of high-resolution satellite sources has led us to begin building a modest commercial data access and management project. The three components of this project that are receiving the most attention as the activity matures are to:

- Assess and implement mechanisms for acquisition of commercially produced, remotely sensed data products for Bureau programs through contractual, cooperative, or R&D agreements.

- Develop an effective USGS commercial imagery strategy and coordinate with the activities of other DOI bureaus, other civil agencies, and the commercial imagery acquisition and management activities of the National Imagery and Mapping Agency.

- Develop strategy and plans for conducting, summarizing, and communicating results of processes, standards, verification, and validation of remotely sensed products acquired from commercial sources.

With these interests on the part of the USGS, and with the cooperative support of NASA, NIMA and our commercial partners, I'm sure that the results of this workshop and others like it will be instrumental in our future directions. With that, I encourage you to make the most of the resources present here today, and look forward to the results of your work.